

Volunteer Analysis

Volunteerism in the National Park Service is designed to be a mutually beneficial relationship. Volunteers allow full-time staff to concentrate on areas where staff expertise and experience can add the greatest value. In turn, volunteers receive experience in a field of interest and management feedback from national seashore staff. Interpretive volunteers staff the visitor center and conduct specific programs based on their interest and abilities. Natural resource volunteers help with projects such as invasive weed removal and installation of range fencing to protect riparian habitat. Cultural resource volunteers can assist with the stewardship of archeological sites. General management volunteers help with tasks such as filing and data management.

Volunteers are a critical component of Point Reyes National Seashore operations. The average hourly valuation rate for volunteers in Fiscal Year 2006 was \$18.04 according to NPS standards, which yielded a benefit of \$631,905 to Point Reyes National Seashore. The national seashore's ratio of volunteers to park staff is 0.17, which is on par with the National Park Service average of 0.16. Total volunteer hours increased in Fiscal Year 2006 from the previous year, continuing a steady yearly increase since Fiscal Year 2004. However, Fiscal Year 2006 aggregate volunteer hours are still below Fiscal Year 2003 levels. Volunteer time declined by almost 9,800 hours, or 26 percent, from Fiscal Year 2003 to Fiscal Year 2004.

In Fiscal Year 2006, through the assistance of volunteers, Point Reyes National Seashore was able to produce numerous interpretive documents informing the public about topics such as whale migration and fire ecology and was able to monitor habitat and population health for species such as harbor and elephant seals. Training for supervisors on volunteer management will help improve the quality of Point Reyes National Seashore volunteer programs and ensure that the current increase from Fiscal Year 2005 in total volunteer hours is maintained.

The national seashore facilitates volunteerism by several methods. Interested citizens can volunteer through the National Park Service Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program, which allows individuals to assist parks within the NPS. Each division within Point Reyes National Seashore has offered VIP opportunities, underscoring the seashore's support for the VIP program. Volunteers are also identified by partner organizations, including groups such as the Student Conservation Association and Youth Conservation Corps, which help maintain trails, restore habitat, and administer operations. In addition to volunteering directly with Point Reyes, individuals can help through the park's cooperating organization, Point Reyes National Seashore Association. The seashore would like to make a larger volunteer recruiting effort for under-represented members of the San Francisco Bay Area; however, current funding and staff levels do not yet allow for this type of outreach.

Point Reyes National Seashore Annual Volunteer Hours

